

FACT SHEET NO. 1
JANUARY 2001



Gratts Elementary School

REMEDIAL INVESTIGATION/FEASIBILITY STUDY

ANNOUNCEMENT

California
Environmental
Protection Agency

*DEPARTMENT OF TOXIC
SUBSTANCES CONTROL*

*It is DTSC's mission
to protect public
health and the
environment from
harmful exposure
to hazardous
substances.*



Introduction

The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) is conducting an environmental investigation at Gratts Elementary School, located at 309 Lucas Avenue in Los Angeles. The California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA) Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) will oversee the investigation, called a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS).

Meeting Notice

The public is invited to attend a briefing on the investigation at the Gratts School Advisory Council meeting on:

Date: January 25, 2001
Time: 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.
Location: Gratts Elementary School
Multipurpose Room
309 Lucas Avenue

Environmental studies conducted on the property prior to and during construction of the school found that the soil and groundwater beneath the school site were contaminated with petroleum products and solvents. Before the school opening in 1996, groundwater and soil treatment units were installed to cleanup subsurface contaminants. The treatment units have operated since 1996 and quarterly groundwater monitoring has been conducted. The results of air monitoring conducted in May 2000 by the LAUSD indicate that there is no immediate health risk to students and faculty at the site.

Purpose of the Investigation

This investigation is part of the LAUSD's ongoing efforts to ensure schools are safe for students, faculty, and staff. Currently, Phase I of the *Remedial Investigation* is under way. The purpose of Phase I is to:

- Evaluate current environmental conditions at the site.
- Identify the sources of the subsurface contamination and define the nature and extent of contamination within soil gas, soil, and groundwater resulting from those sources.

- Conduct a Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessment to evaluate potential risks to human health and the environment from contaminants on the site. The results of the risk evaluation will be used to evaluate the need for and nature of additional remedial (treatment) measures.

Phase II of the Remedial Investigation, if deemed necessary based on findings of the risk assessment, will focus on additional groundwater characterization and treatment system evaluation. In addition, a *Feasibility Study* may be prepared to evaluate alternatives for cleaning up any further soil or groundwater problems, if necessary. DTSC will oversee the activities throughout the RI/FS process and ensure they are conducted in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations.

Site History

Gratts Elementary School is located on a 5.2-acre site in downtown Los Angeles. It opened in 1996. The school includes three buildings (Buildings A, B, and C) on the corner of Third Street and Lucas Avenue, a subterranean parking garage (Building D) on the western portion of the property, classroom trailers in the southwest corner of the property, an asphalt recreation area, and landscaped areas. An operating soil and groundwater treatment system is located within a fenced enclosure on the west side of Building C and is accessible from Third Street.

Prior to construction of the school, residential structures occupied portions of the property from at least 1894 to 1990, and a taxi garage and maintenance facility occupied part of the site from 1923 to 1984. The site was also used for retail stores from 1918 to 1988. The taxi garage included four hydraulic hoists, auto body and paint shops with a spray paint booth and a three-stage clarifier, and seven underground storage tanks.

The former structures at the site were demolished in 1993 in preparation for construction of the new school. Investigations conducted prior to school construction revealed contaminated soils and groundwater beneath the site from fuel releases from the former underground storage tanks and solvents in the vicinity of the former paint shop.

After the automotive facilities were demolished, an estimated 2,055 cubic yards of soil contaminated with petroleum products were excavated, treated onsite, and used as backfill. An additional 2,192 cubic yards were excavated and disposed offsite. A treatment system was installed in 1995 to clean-up the remaining contaminated soil and groundwater. The system removes floating fuel from the water beneath the site. The recovered fuel is transported offsite for disposal. The system also pumps groundwater and removes soil vapors from beneath the site and removes the contaminants. Groundwater samples are collected on a quarterly basis to monitor the cleanup progress.

Additionally, a high-density polyethylene liner was placed beneath Building A, Building C, and a portion of Building D during construction of the school as a safety measure to prevent subsurface vapors from reaching the structures.

Remedial Investigation Work Plan

A Remedial Investigation Work Plan has been prepared to describe how the LAUSD will conduct the investigation of the site. Fieldwork for the Remedial Investigation will include sampling and analysis of soil gas and soil, and drilling and installing groundwater monitoring wells on the school property and on streets adjacent to the site.

The fieldwork is scheduled to begin in February 2001 and is expected to be completed by April. The work will be conducted on weekdays after 6:00 p.m. and on weekends. No onsite intrusive fieldwork will be conducted when children are present or when school is in session. Work on the adjacent streets will not include any street closures and will not be conducted on holidays. When the field investigations and studies are complete, a report on the findings of the investigation will be prepared and submitted to the DTSC for approval. The Phase I Remedial Investigation Report is scheduled to be available for public review in August 2001. If it is determined that a Phase II investigation and feasibility study are required, subsequent reports will be made available for public review.

Community Survey

In an effort to involve the community, DTSC has enclosed a brief community survey. **Please return the community survey by *February 5, 2001*** to let us know your concerns, questions and additional ideas for public outreach. Based on your response, additional public meetings may be held in the future to keep you informed on this investigation. If a meeting is scheduled we will notify school personnel, parents of students, nearby residents and businesses, property owners, and other interested parties.

For More Information

If you have any comments or questions, please contact Treva Miller, DTSC Public Participation Specialist, at (818) 551-2846, or David Jensen, CDM Program Manager, LAUSD Environmental Health & Safety Branch, at (213) 743-5086. For calls after 5:00 p.m. during fieldwork activities, please contact the Project Field Coordinator at (714) 328-6573.

Additionally, all site documents are available for public review at the following repositories:

Los Angeles Public Library
Echo Park Branch
1410 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90026
Phone: (213) 250-7808

Department of Toxic Substances Control
Regional Public Records Office
1011 N. Grandview Avenue
Glendale, CA 91201
Contact: Jone Barrio (818) 551-2886